



Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy
Statement for the Record
To Honor the Life of Billy Manes
July 27, 2017

Mr. Speaker:

It is with a heavy heart that I rise to honor the life and legacy of Billy Manes. Billy passed away last week, far too soon, at the age of 45. He is survived by his husband, Anthony, and an entire community that admired him. With Billy's passing, Orlando lost an icon, and our nation lost a committed, passionate, and fierce advocate for equality.

In Billy's short time with us, he made an indelible impact on our city and our country. He was a prominent Orlando journalist and commentator, and the power of his words moved and amused central Florida. Billy broke barriers, becoming the first openly gay mayoral candidate in Orlando's history. After the tragic loss of his partner in 2012, Billy bravely told his story to the world, putting a human face on the pressing need for equal rights for same-sex couples.

Last year, when our Orlando family was reeling from the Pulse nightclub shooting, Billy gave voice to our city's grief. He relentlessly focused on the 49 beautiful lives we lost that night. Like them, Billy will never be forgotten.

If you ever had the privilege and the pleasure of meeting Billy, you couldn't escape his energy, his passion, and his endearing sense of humor.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical this hallowed chamber carry on the work that Billy so valiantly championed. Though we have so much progress to celebrate, too many of the inequities that Billy's work spotlighted remain.

May his memory inspire us to redouble our commitment to equality.

